

Torpedo Warfare.

The weapons used for under-water warfare are called "torpedoes."

There are two kinds of torpedoes: those that are anchored in one place and those that swim about in the water. Of those that are anchored, there are also two kinds. One kind consists of great iron boxes filled with dynamite and sunk in the water at particular places. They rest in the mud, or on the sand and stones, till they are ready to be fired, when they blow up or explode with terrible effect; and if a ship happens to be passing over one of them, she is sure to be torn to pieces. The other kind have a float anchored just out of sight under water, while the torpedo rests on the bottom. These, too, when they explode, destroy anything that happens to be near.

There are two ways of firing these ground torpedoes: on one there is a wire, carefully protected from the water, leading from the torpedo to the shore. The soldiers in charge of it can send electricity through this wire and set fire to the dynamite, and thus fire the torpedo. The torpedo is lost and destroyed, but the broken wire can be pulled ashore, and used again on another torpedo. The second method is to fasten to the torpedo a wooden float. If one of the enemy's ships passes over such a torpedo and happens to strike and push aside the float that is anchored just over it, this will also fire the torpedo, for the chain or rope that anchors the float is connected with the torpedo, and any strain or pull on the rope discharges it. In this way the ship itself may fire the torpedo, and thus become an agent in its own destruction.

The swimming torpedoes are of two kinds. One of these swims like a fish, and, if it strikes its nose against a ship, explodes, and sinks the vessel by tearing a terrible hole in the bottom. Another kind can also swim, but it carries fastened to its tail a long wire, which it drags through the water wherever it goes. By means of this wire, the soldier who stands at the end, on the shore, or the sailor on board ship, can make the fish turn to the right or left, dive, turn around, go backward, or come home again when it is wanted. Besides this, the fish will blow up if it strikes against the enemy's ship, or whenever the man at the wire wishes to fire it. The Government will not tell us how such a wonderful thing can be done, but you may be sure that these fish-torpedoes are strange fellows. They seem to be able to do everything that a fish can do, and more, for when they get angry they can burst out into a frightful passion and send the water flying into the air for hundreds of feet, and woe to the sailors who are near! Torpedo, ship and men go the bottom in a volcano of fire and water. Besides these anchored and swimming torpedoes, there is another kind called spar-torpedoes, so named because they are placed on the ends of spars or booms that run out under water from the bows of small boats. The boats rush up to the side of the big ship, in the dark, and explode the torpedo underneath, thus sinking the vessel.—Charles Barnard, in St. Nicholas.

—A frog fell into a pail of milk in a Connecticut town one night recently, and in the morning was found sitting upon a roll of fresh butter. A local paper says that the sole explanation is that, in trying to extricate himself, he had, by diligent and continuous strokes of his long legs, churned the milk into butter.—New Haven Register.

—Gardeners at Potsdam, N. Y., raise little violet trees by preventing the plants from blooming for several years, and having them grow upright by removing the lower leaves and shoots. These little trees, about fourteen centimeters high, are very pretty. Some of the gardeners winter as many as 20,000 pots of violets.

—The Michigan Farmer recommends cutting away the old tops from the asparagus beds; clean off all weeds, and cover the grounds with a liberal mulch of good manure. Early in spring fork over the surface, allowing the short, rotten portion of the manure to remain, but raking off the coarse, strawy material.

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